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January 13, 2015

Montana State Legislature
House Business and Labor Committee
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

sent via email to:
karmstrong@mt.gov

RE: HB 95, Public Adjusters – NAMIC's Written Testimony in SUPPORT of Legislation

Dear Representative Berry, Chair; Representative Salomon, Vice-Chair; Representative Lynch, Vice-Chair; and honorable members of the House Business and Labor Committee:

Thank you for affording the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC) an opportunity to submit written testimony to the House Business and Labor Committee for the January 14, 2015, public hearing.

NAMIC is the largest property/casualty insurance trade association in the country, serving regional and local mutual insurance companies on main streets across America as well as many of the country's largest national insurers.

The 1,400 NAMIC member companies serve more than 135 million auto, home and business policyholders and write more than \$196 billion in annual premiums, accounting for 50 percent of the automobile/homeowners market and 31 percent of the business insurance market. NAMIC has 134 members who write property/casualty insurance in the State of Montana, which represents 40% of the insurance marketplace.

Through our advocacy programs we promote public policy solutions that benefit NAMIC companies and the consumers we serve. Our educational programs enable us to become better leaders in our companies and the insurance industry for the benefit of our policyholders.

NAMIC appreciates and shares State Auditor Lindeen's and Representative McCarthy's desire to provide insurance consumers with clarity as to the scope and legal duties owed by public adjusters to their clients. Insurance consumers and public adjusters will both benefit from HB 95, because it will resolve many of the ambiguities that currently exist in the professional relationship between public adjusters and insurance consumers. HB 95 will help facilitate informed insurance consumer choice and assist public adjusters in providing their clients with a clear statement of what should be expected by the insurance consumer in the professional relationship.

NAMIC also supports HB 95, because the proposed legislation provides for thoughtful and measured public adjuster regulatory oversight, which is an important part of the claim adjusting and settlement process. HB 95 is consistent with the national trend toward greater regulatory supervision of the consumer-public adjuster professional relationship and is consistent with the tenets of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) Model on Public Adjusters.

For the aforementioned reasons, NAMIC respectfully requests that the House Business and Labor Committee VOTE YES on HB 78, because it is a reasonable and appropriate consumer protection bill that balances the needs of insurance consumers and public adjusters.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at 303.907.0587 or at crataj@namic.org, if you would like to discuss NAMIC's written testimony.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian John Rataj".

Christian John Rataj, Esq.
NAMIC – Senior Director of State Affairs
Western Region